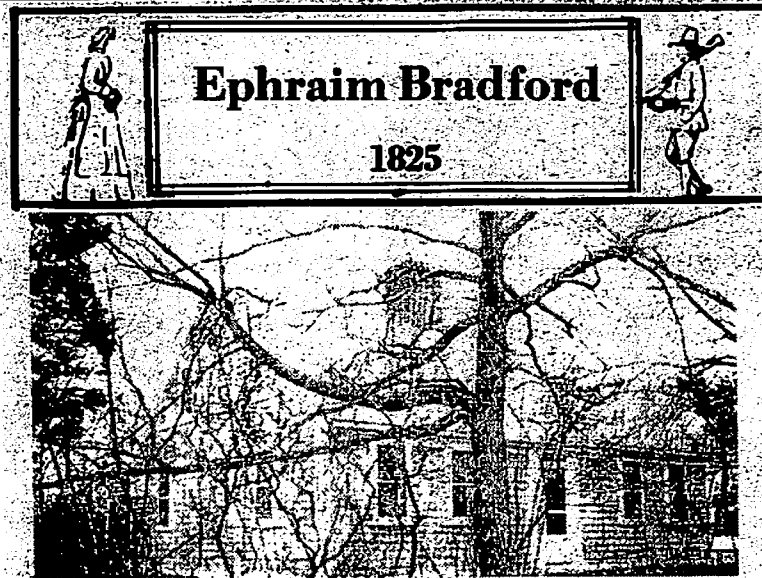


## *HISTORICAL HOUSES - NAMED, A-L*

Duxbury Clipper, Thursday, December 22, 1977



On Feb. 22, 1825, Ezra Weston, Esq. sold to Ephraim Bradford, ropemaker, for \$53.12½, "85 rods of improved land, it being part of my homestead farm." Ezra and Jerusha Weston signed the deed and Alden B. Weston witnessed it. This was a small lot on the far northeast end of the Weston Farm, with the north bound the road that is now Powder Point Ave.

Ephraim Bradford was a widower when he came from Plymouth to take charge of the Weston Rope Walk. Within 3 years he married Lucy Peterson and they lived in a Weston-owned house until 1825, when Ephraim built on the lot he purchased from Ezra Weston.

The house is a small Cape with the door facing west. The road on the north side was only a cart path and it seemed likely to stay so. It was more sensible to look west to the Rope Walk and the more active area along the Blue Fish River. Ephraim Bradford was a skilled workman, commanding a good wage, and the house he built is a solid, substantial Cape, around a central chimney, a compact cottage on a small lot.

The stairs in the front hall are simple, the woodwork in the 2 front rooms is plain, and all the other rooms present a good plain look. The small fan light over the front door is the only decorative bit of architecture anywhere. The windows are narrow, with small panes of wavy old glass, well spaced to light the comfortable home.

The old kitchen fireplace is still there, a broad hearth with a deep oven to one side. The iron door to the oven swings on stout hinges and was probably made in the shipyard forge, as were the cranes in the wide fireplace where Lucy Bradford hung her cooking pots. She must have enjoyed her fireplace and deep oven, large even for those days of big families. At the end of her kitchen was a buttry with a small storage cellar under it, with a dirt floor and field stone walls.

The lot was too small for much farming but there was room for a small vegetable garden and a barn for the cow and horse. That barn may be the frame of a guest house on the south end of the lot today. There are exposed timbers that support that possibility.

There have been many changes in the house over the years but none that hide the original cottage. There is an ell that could have been added in the Bradford's time, some dormer windows and a door on the north side that are certainly later, and some interior changes that suited later owners. Through it all the old cottage dominates the improvements.

In this house John Bradford grew up, the same Captain John Bradford whose recollections of shipyards and mariners are so valuable to the history of Duxbury. He wrote that he was a boy when the HOPE was launched into Blue Fish River and that he later was in command of that historic vessel.

Ephraim and Lucy Bradford saw many changes on Powder Point. The Rope Walk was shut down, the shipyard closed, and the Weston house was unoccupied. They lived on, comfortable in their snug house, their savings lasting out their lifetimes. Ephraim provided for Lucy in his will but left nothing to his 6 children "for the reason that in all probability I shall leave but little property." The inventory of his estate shows the property value in 1870 "does not exceed \$1,000."

For all that, Lucy had enough to last her days and her heirs sold the land with all buildings thereon for \$960, and the little house still stands facing the west, the home of Michael E. and Suzanne M. Reed.

Dorothy Wentworth, Researcher